

FURTHER NOTES ON THE BIRDS OF LEON COUNTY,
FLORIDA.

BY R. W. WILLIAMS, JR.

A YEAR ago I published a preliminary list of the birds of Leon County, Florida,¹ which comprised the species I had then observed, with notes of such facts connected with them as seemed of special interest. As subsequent observations, besides materially extending this list, have added information concerning the birds already listed, it seems desirable to publish a supplementary article on the birds of the county.

Most of the information here recorded was gathered in the fall of 1904 during early morning excursions through McDougall's pasture and to a thickly wooded hill a quarter of a mile from the city limits, which I have designated in my journals, and likewise do here, as 'Lively's woods,' from the name of the owner. Birds found here are individually and specifically so numerous that a brief description of the locality may be interesting. McDougall's pasture, ornithologically the most productive limited area I have ever seen, covers about sixty acres. A small cypress swamp, with its marshes, occupies the center, from which, on the eastern and western sides gradually rises a symmetrical, grass-carpeted hill, that on the western reaching its highest elevation in the back yard of the owners of the pasture, just on the line that marks the eastern limits of Tallahassee. The eastern one terminates (and the country thence assumes a level condition) at the western edge of Lively's woods. This woodland occupies an area of about thirteen acres and is composed largely of such trees as the live and water oaks, sweet gums, hickories, pines, magnolias, persimmons, and hollies, none of which attain any great size and the oaks are rather remarkable for their slenderness and the scarcity of their lower branches or twigs, the growth of which has developed principally at and near the top. Among the leaves and branches of these trees I found the migrating warblers very abundant and was surprised to note

¹Auk, Vol. XXI, 1904, pp. 449-462.

the large quantity of insect food they procured there. The minor shrubbery is in places quite thick and furnishes a home for the more terrestrial species. The Seaboard Air Line Railroad cuts off a small strip of low woodland on the south side where the magnolias and sweet gums assume gigantic proportions, and through which runs a clear, cool and swift little stream, the watering place of the birds frequenting the locality. From its comparatively high situation and the abundance of food, Lively's woods furnishes a tempting halting place for the small birds passing southward in the fall. I was often in the woods at daybreak, and from that time till about 7 o'clock the migrants were very active, but after that hour and on throughout the day they could not be found.

What uncomfortable recollections still linger with me of the pains and penalties inflicted by that microscopic pest, the red bug (*Leptus*). Every conceivable spot in the woodland seemed infested by them and to entirely escape the plague was quite impossible though the severity of their sting was largely mitigated by the free use of sulphur sprinkled down the legs of my underclothes before leaving home.

The absence of a number before the species following indicates its incorporation in the former list and the addition of a number, that it is now recorded for the first time. I have continued the numbers in serial order from my first paper, thereby the more readily to present the number of species found in the county.

LIST OF SPECIES.

. 157. **Anas obscura.** BLACK DUCK.—Found three of these birds on sale at one of the stores on Nov. 8, 1904. They had been killed on Lake Jackson.

Sayornis phœbe. PHŒBE.—First seen in fall of 1904, Oct. 2.

Contopus virens. WOOD PEWEE.—First seen in fall of 1904, Aug. 28. From this date till Oct. 12 they were fairly common, but then disappeared. I have no evidence yet of their occurrence in the county during spring or early summer.

158. **Empidonax virescens.** GREEN-CRESTED FLYCATCHER.—Sept. 11, 1904, I saw the bird for the first time in the county, in a dark, damp part of Lively's woods. The explosive *peet* made known its presence. Last seen Oct. 9. It has been recorded as a nesting bird in South Florida but I am satisfied it does not even occur in Leon County except as a fall, and perhaps a spring, migrant.

Agelaius phoeniceus. RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD.—I stated in my former article that the males of this species assume the female plumage in winter. In his notice of the article in 'Bird-Lore' for November-December, 1904, Dr. Dwight very gracefully suggests the error of this assertion and says: "He has evidently mistaken the young males for the females and not seen the black adults with the red shoulder-patches. This raises the question, Where have the adults betaken themselves? for they are certainly conspicuous enough not to escape notice." I freely acknowledge the mistake and hope to be able to answer the question some time in the future. The fact is, however, that the birds wintering with us have no shoulder-patch.

Sturnella magna argutula. SOUTHERN MEADOWLARK.—The Leon County meadowlarks must be referred to this subspecies. The difference in size between the birds found here and those taken in Maryland is very marked, the latter being, of course, the larger.

Astragalinus tristis. AMERICAN GOLDFINCH.—First seen in fall of 1904, Nov. 17. I was not afield the ten days prior to this date and they may have arrived a few days prior thereto.

Poœcetes gramineus. VESPER SPARROW.—First seen in fall of 1904, Oct. 13. They were rather common, and as I walked through McDougall's pasture in the dim light of early morning they arose from the short tufts of grass on all sides and scurried away to an apparently safe distance, incessantly uttering their faint monosyllabic *chip*.

Passerculus sandwichensis savanna. SAVANNA SPARROW.—For the first time I am now able to give some accurate information respecting this bird in the county. On the morning of Oct. 6, 1904, while walking through the pasture, I flushed several from the short tufts of grass but was unable to procure a specimen. I was more fortunate that evening, when, just before nightfall I took a chance shot at one, a female, that flushed some distance away and lit within range of my 'aux.' This date marks the first fall appearance of the bird in the county in 1904. At all events it is my first record, and I was in the field almost daily prior thereto. From this date till Oct. 28 they were fairly common, after which the numbers diminished perceptibly. As I met with the bird during January and February I conclude that it must be a winter resident in limited numbers.

Spizella pusilla. FIELD SPARROW.—It gives me great pleasure to here record the species as a nesting bird in the county, although Mr. Wayne has heretofore mentioned it as a nesting species in the adjoining county of Jefferson. On Dec. 10, 1904, I was shooting partridges (*Colinus*) in a large broomsedge field four miles from town. Everywhere were tangled masses of blackberry vines. The covey was nicely scattered, the birds rising singly. I had three on the ground and concluded to pick them up before flushing another. As I stooped to recover the first, my attention was suddenly arrested by a well preserved nest, which struck me instantly as that of a sparrow. I temporarily forgot the partridge in my zeal to identify the nest. Carefully removing it from its thorny surroundings, I safely

packed it away in a manila envelope I had with me. A darkey boy with me, who lived in the neighborhood, seeing my evident interest in the nest volunteered the statement that it was "a sparrow's nest." He had seen several, with eggs, in this same field during the "blackberry time." Questioning him closely, I found that his information was accurate in every detail to a highly satisfactory degree. He described the eggs minutely and stated the correct number, and if any doubt of the identity of the nest could have existed before it was dispelled by his statements.

Melospiza cinerea melodia. SONG SPARROW.—First record for the fall of 1904 was on Oct. 16. Several were feeding in the bullrushes of McDougall's swamp. They were singing sweetly on March 12, 1905.

Melospiza georgiana. SWAMP SPARROW.—First seen in the fall of 1904, Oct. 6. An exceedingly common bird in the bullrushes of McDougall's swamp.

Cyanospiza cyanea. INDIGO BUNTING.—During the latter part of August I found these birds very abundant in the sweet gums and oaks scattered here and there in McDougall's pasture. For some time I was unable to procure a specimen as they were extremely wary and remained, for the short time I had to be afield in the morning, in the topmost branches of the largest trees. Finally on Oct. 9, finding a number feeding in a small rice patch across the railroad, I procured specimens. Last seen Oct. 15.

Piranga erythromelas. SCARLET TANAGER.—Collected an adult female in Lively's woods Oct. 12, 1904. Have no further records.

Piranga rubra. SUMMER TANAGER.—The bulk of these birds left the county about the close of September. On Oct. 26 I collected a young female in Lively's woods — a very late date for this bird in the county.

159. **Hirundo erythrogastra.** BARN SWALLOW.—Found a number of these birds circling over the pasture in quest of their insect prey on the evening of Aug. 28. Their graceful flight lent a charm to the scene of the quiet pasture near the close of that perfect day.

Vireo olivaceus. RED-EYED VIREO.—A very common bird during the fall. The bulk arrived in 1904 the latter part of August and none were seen after Oct. 15. The bird nests in the county sparingly.

160. **Vireo solitarius.** BLUE-HEADED VIREO.—On Jan. 22, 1905, I saw this species in the county for the first time, a single bird in Lively's woods. Recorded another Jan. 29.

Vireo noveboracensis. WHITE-EYED VIREO.—I found these birds quite common in Lively's woods on October 7. One was singing sweetly from the upper branches of a small sweetgum. The bulk of these birds left the county about Oct. 15. The bird nests sparingly with us.

Mniotilta varia. BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER.—Found very abundant on Aug. 28 in Lively's woods. Evidently a band on their way south from their northern homes.

161. **Helinaia swainsonii.** SWAINSON WARBLER.—Each succeeding day of the fall of 1904 seemed destined to produce for me some record of a new species or valuable additional or cumulative evidence respecting species

heretofore known only casually. The height of my good fortune was reached when on the morning of Sept. 24, by the purest chance, I secured a single example of this species. The bird was taken in the coppice bordering Lively's woods, within a few inches of the spot where a week before I had collected my first Worm-eating Warbler of the county. This is the first and only record I have for the county. Diligent search for others after that date developed nothing.

162. *Helmitherus vermivorus*. WORM-EATING WARBLER.—I collected a single specimen in Lively's woods on Sept. 16. The bird was in the coppice bordering the woods and, as stated above, within a few inches of the spot where I collected the Swainson Warbler. Search failed to reward me again and I am of the opinion that this species is a rare migrant. Why I had never seen these two species before may be accounted for by my disposition to enjoy that 'morning nap' one hears so much of. My experiences during this fall impressed upon me the necessity of early morning work if one expects to know the birds of his locality.

163. *Helminthophila celata*. ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER.—This species is doubtless a winter resident in the county. On Jan. 31, 1905, I collected one in Lively's woods; it was feeding with a number of Golden-crowned Kinglets. On March 12 I found them in the sweet gum trees of the pasture.

164. *Helminthophila peregrina*. TENNESSEE WARBLER.—So far as I am now aware this species is a fall migrant only. I found a migrating band on the morning of Oct. 26, 1904, feeding in the top branches of the slender oaks of Lively's woods. They were passing from tree to tree at a lively rate and I had some difficulty in keeping up with them. Collected three, male and female and one not examined, and another on the 28th.

Compsothlypis americana. PARULA WARBLER.—These birds were quite common from the middle of August to the middle of October. On the 16th of the latter month I found a number feeding on and near the ground in a cotton field. They left the county about Oct. 20.

Dendroica coronata. MYRTLE WARBLER.—Arrived Oct. 16 and was immediately common.

165. *Dendroica maculosa*. MAGNOLIA WARBLER.—I collected a single specimen on Oct. 11. The bird was in a vine-covered tree on the border of a ditch running through a field near town. Have no other record, though I was on the alert for them afterwards.

166. *Dendroica pensylvanica*. CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER.—Collected an immature male on September 23 in Lively's woods and found them rather common until Oct. 13, when they disappeared. It is a fall migrant.

167. *Dendroica castanea*. BAY-BREASTED WARBLER.—My first and only record was made on Oct. 13 when I collected a male in Lively's woods.

168. *Dendroica striata*. BLACK-POLL WARBLER.—I saw this species for the first time in the county on Oct. 11, when I collected a male in fall plumage. On the 28th I collected another in Lively's woods.

169. *Dendroica blackburniæ*. BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER.—I am glad to be able to add this lovely species to the list of the birds of the county. On the morning of Oct. 26 I heard the monosyllabic notes of a number of birds that were passing rapidly from tree to tree in Lively's woods. I began the chase and after some difficulty succeeded in collecting two of the birds. They were Tennessee Warblers. A third shot into the bunch brought down a very pretty male Blackburnian Warbler. My only record.

Dendroica dominica. YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER.—Additional notes made in the fall of 1904 establish the constant residence of this species in the county, though the bulk of them moves further south in winter.

170. *Dendroica virens*. BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER.—I added this species to the list of the birds of the county on Oct. 12, 1904, when I collected a fine adult male in Lively's woods and on the following day, another. Have no further records.

Dendroica palmarum. PALM WARBLER.—First of season seen Oct. 16. Found them common on March 12, 1905, feeding on the ground in the pasture in company with Yellow Palm and Myrtle Warblers. I think these were birds passing through from the south.

Dendroica palmarum hypochrysea. YELLOW PALM WARBLER.—As the preceding and this bird are almost inseparable in our county, what is said of the former applies in most cases to the latter. Except in the dead of winter I always find them together.

Seiurus aurocapillus. OVENBIRD.—Can now record the bird as a fall migrant. First seen Aug. 17, 1904, in Lively's woods. There were several. On Oct. 2, I again saw them and followed this by a record for Oct. 9, when they were fairly common. No more were seen.

171. *Seiurus noveboracensis notabilis*. GRINNELL WATER THRUSH.—The birds collected during the fall of 1904 are pronounced by Dr. Bishop to be of this subspecies. Late in the evening of Sept. 13, while lingering on the edge of the marsh of McDougall's swamp, lost in the quiet splendor of a day rapidly waning, my attention was attracted by several small, dark colored birds that now and again passed from the edge of the marsh near me to the tall trees of an adjoining field and returned, as something seemed to disturb them. After considerable difficulty I succeeded in collecting one, a male. On the 24th I collected another in Lively's woods. Last seen Oct. 10. They were fairly common in the pasture and Lively's woods from the first record to the last.

Seiurus motacilla. LOUISIANA WATER THRUSH.—Collected one on August 29. They were never abundant and the last were seen on Sept. 18.

172. *Oporornis formosa*. KENTUCKY WARBLER.—Met with this bird for the first time in the county on Sept. 4, 1904, when I was walking along the public road leading down past McDougall's swamp. It was in the bushes on the side of the road. Later in the day, and five miles in another direction, I found two feeding in the tall weeds bordering a dense woodland. On the 11th another was seen, and on the 18th I collected a fine male on our plantation five miles from town. This was the last seen.

Wilsonia mitrata. HOODED WARBLER.—Of the pleasant recollections of the fall of 1904 none will remain so indelibly impressed upon my memory as those of the present species. The dry and lifeless skin of this bird excites more than ordinary appreciation of the beauties of natural things, so how much more intense must be that feeling when one can spend a morning in a beautiful virgin forest inhabited by several pairs of the living birds? Such was my privilege in that memorable season. In my former paper I was in great doubt as to the status of this bird with us. I said it was a migrant, never abundant. So the matter stood until August 17, 1904, when the spirit of fall possessed me and I betook myself to Lively's woods for recreation and relief from the endless vexations and annoyances of a professional life. No sooner had I climbed the wire fence than my presence disturbed a pair of these birds which was feeding on the ground near the edge of the woods. Their characteristic alarm notes resounded through the forest and I was deeply sensible of the position I occupied — that of an unwelcomed trespasser upon the domains of at least one of the legitimate proprietors of that bounty of Providence. The birds were in a high state of plumage, which stood out in well defined contrast to their dull-colored surroundings, for the Hooded Warbler is a bird of the earth, his ambition rarely taking him into the higher trees. Contented he is to spend his days among the fallen leaves or in the humbler growth of swamp or forest. There he shines and lives and is happy. There were six or eight pairs of them in this woodland and when the necessities of the times did not demand my presence elsewhere I could enjoy an hour or two in their midst, watching their every movement with my field glasses. They seemed always actively in search of food though they went at it very deliberately, in fact the bird has a very phlegmatic disposition, in the fall at any rate, and its movements are strangely different from those of any other warbler I know. On Oct. 16 they were still there. On the 26th an oppressive silence reigned throughout the woodland — they had gone.

Setophaga ruticilla. AMERICAN REDSTART.—Saw a female on August 19, 1904, in our yard. Sept. 23 they were common in Lively's woods. None seen after Oct. 14.

Anthus pensilvanicus. AMERICAN PIPIT.—In my former paper I said I had never seen this bird. There was no truth in the statement. I had seen it a hundred times but assumed it was the Vesper Sparrow and let the matter rest. Lake Lafayette is a large body of water, no where very deep, and there are seasons when it goes entirely dry, leaving a marsh stretching to the east and west almost as far as the eye can distinguish objects the size of a large oak. The whole body of land is covered with a growth of aquatic grass which when burned off makes way for a succulent grass that cattle are fond of. The place then becomes a pasture. I was so sure the bird ought to be there and so anxious to verify the statements of my friend who asserted the abundance of the species in the county, that on the evening of Nov. 26, 1904, I stole away from my office and drove to the lake, only to find overwhelming evidence of the accuracy of his assertion. The pasture

— for so it was then — was simply alive with titlarks. Flocks of hundreds were feeding over the ground and now and then, when disturbed by some roving hound or cur of the neighborhood, a veritable cloud of the birds filled the air. I afterwards found them feeding in high, newly plowed land and on several occasions met with them in some leafless tree in the middle of a field. The bird is a common winter resident.

Galeoscoptes carolinensis. CATBIRD.— Observations made during the fall and winter of 1904–5 lead me to the belief that if the bird is a winter resident at all it is quite rare. The history of those observations is as follows: First of season seen Oct. 3, several in Lively's woods and they were very noisy; a few days later I noticed a marked diminution in their numbers; by the 28th they were only occasionally seen or heard, and after the 10th of Nov. I did not see them again till Jan. 29, 1905, when I found one in a deep woodland near town, feeding on the berries of *Smilax*. None were seen again till March 10, when I found one in our yard. I left home shortly thereafter, so know nothing of the spring movement.

Certhia familiaris fusca. BROWN CREEPER.— I was passing through the pasture on the morning of Oct. 28, on my way home from Lively's woods, when passing under a gigantic live oak, I detected the high notes of this bird. A few moments' search revealed the little fellow climbing up the side of an upright limb near the top. On Jan. 29, 1905, I found another in a strip of woods a mile from town, and on Feb. 26 saw another searching the main trunk of a large pine. The bird is a winter resident in limited numbers.

Polioptila cærulea. BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER.— My records of this bird's occurrence throughout the winter of 1904–5 establish its constant residence in the county, though it is quite probable that those we have in winter are birds from the north while our summer residents move further south at that season.

173. **Hylocichla fuscescens.** WILSON THRUSH. 'Whieu'—the weird notes of an unknown and unseen bird fell upon my ear during the first few mornings of my visits to Lively's woods. It was annoying in the extreme to leave the place in ignorance of the author, but I was unable to see the bird. Finally on Sept. 11, I was able to record the species. I saw one sitting upon the lower branch of a scrub oak with drooping wings and a querulous air. Until Oct. 9 they were quite common and whiled away a part of their seemingly aimless life chasing each other around the woods. They disappeared by the middle of the month.

Hylocichla guttata pallasii. HERMIT THRUSH.— This bird is associated with my childhood, perhaps more intimately than any other species, resident or migratory. In the days of that instrument of the devil, the sling shot, it was an easy mark. It sickens my soul now to recount the numbers that must be recorded against me somewhere. If a stricken conscience is any expiation of my crime I must be partially forgiven. But all that is necessary in a paper of this character has been recorded in my former article and I only wish to continue longer that I may boast of having

heard the song of the Hermit Thrush. Although I had spent my life in the winter home of this bird and its habits were as familiar to me as those of the Mockingbird, I had never heard it utter a sound other than a low, guttural, monosyllabic note expressive of alarm and kindred emotions. I was thus unprepared for the marvelous and elaborate song I heard on that 19th day of March, 1905. It marks an epoch in my ornithological career. Referring to my journal of that date I find the following: "I was out in Lively's woods early Sunday morning, March 19, 1905. Recent rains had dampened the woods so that a gloomy aspect pervaded the whole scene. I was standing down the ravine when off in the distance, apparently over in the pasture, I heard the faint notes of what I was sure must be the Wood Thrush; its song being familiar to me in consequence of my late temporary residence in the District of Columbia. I hastened in the direction of the sounds and as I drew near the edge of the woods descried a bird sitting in a small wild plum tree. It seemed annoyed at my intrusion. I stopped to look at it and finding only a Hermit Thrush started on in quest of the singer, when to my surprise the bird settled down upon its perch and commenced in low notes the sweetest and purest song I have ever heard. A lovelier melody never fell upon more grateful ears. The notes, liquescent and ventriloquial, beginning afar off, approaching slowly and finally bursting upon me, are impossible to be described." Mr. Brewster tells me that he has heard them singing in the swamps of Jackson County in early spring.

VARIATION IN THE HAIRY WOODPECKER (*DRYOBATES VILLOSUS* AND SUBSPECIES).

BY HUBERT O. JENKINS.

THIS study was originally intended to be limited to the western forms of the Hairy Woodpecker but later it seemed desirable to include data that had accumulated concerning all of the forms.

The number of adult specimens of each form examined was as follows: *D. v. harrisi*, 43; *D. v. hyloscopus*, 104; *D. v. monticola*, 7; *D. v. leucomelas*, 9; *D. v. villosus*, 12, and *D. v. auduboni*, 3. This includes a large number of intermediates and does not include some 30 immature birds.

I wish to thank Mr. Joseph Grinnell, Mr. W. K. Fisher, Prof.